

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2, 3, and 16-21 are pending. Claims 1, 4, 5, 9, 11, and 13-15 have been canceled without prejudice, Claims 16-21 have been added, and Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to depend from Claim 16. Claims 16, 20, and 21 are independent.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 9, 11, and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Ueda (U.S. Patent No. 6,008,812) in view of the patents to Yamada (U.S. Patent No. 4,672,462) and Clouthier (U.S. Patent No. 5,949,964). Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Ueda in view of the patents to Yamada, and Clouthier, and well-known art discussed at page 9 of the Office Action. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the patent to Ueda in view of the patents to Yamada, Clouthier, and Kim (U.S. Patent No. 5,963,665).

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejections, Claims 1, 4, 5, 9, 11, and 13-15 have been canceled in favor of new Claims 16-21. Applicant submits that new independent Claims 16, 20, and 21 are allowable for the following reasons.

Independent Claim 16 relates to an image processing method for developing an image indicated by a rendering command of an input image in a memory for each predetermined region of the input image and thereby generating an output image. The method comprises a rendering command acquiring step and a color distribution acquiring step, and analyzing, developing, carrying out, outputting, and reacquiring steps.

The acquiring step acquires a rendering command indicating an object image.

The analyzing step analyzes the rendering command and determines whether the object image is of a specific image type or not.

The developing step develops an image corresponding to the rendering command in the memory, acquires a next rendering command, and carries out the determination on the next rendering command when it is determined that the object image is not of the specific image type.

The color distribution acquiring step acquires a color distribution of the object image when it is determined that the object image is of the specific image type.

The carrying out step carries out the acquisition of the rendering command, the determination of whether the object image is of the specific image type, and the development of the image corresponding to the rendering command for each predetermined region when it is determined that the object image is not of the specific image type and carries out the acquisition of the color distribution for each predetermined region when it is determined that the object image is of the specific image type.

The outputting step outputs the developed image which is developed in the memory when there is no object image of the specific image type in the predetermined region.

The reacquiring step reacquires the rendering command indicating the object image in the predetermined region, carries out an image correction process on the object image of the specific image type according to the acquired color distribution, develops the image corresponding to the reacquired rendering command in the memory and outputs the developed image corresponding to

the reacquired rendering command when it is determined that the object image is of the specific image type.

By this arrangement, the number of rendering-command acquisitions is reduced, compared to a conventional method, when image correction is performed on an object image of a specific image type in accordance with the object-image color distribution in a method for developing an image indicated by a rendering command of an input image in a memory for each predetermined region and generating an output image.

The significance of this reduction can be seen as follows. In a conventional image processing method, even when an object image of a specific image type is not contained in an input image, a rendering command is always acquired twice for processing an image. This repetition in acquiring the rendering command permits the method to handle object images of a specific image type that require its rendering command to be analyzed twice for proper processing. But, according to the conventional method, when an object image of a specific image type is contained in only a part of an input image, the entire input image is processed twice, which is unnecessary for the portions of the input image in which the object image is absent. Thus, this conventional process is slower than needed. The present invention, on the other hand, speeds up the output of an image by twice acquiring the rendering command only when needed. More specifically, an image processing method can be carried out for a predetermined region of the image up to the stage of developing the image, based on the assumption that there is no object image of a specific image type in the predetermined region for which the process is performed. Thereafter, when the object image of the specific image type

appears in the middle of the process in a particular predetermined region, the processing method is changed to the one for correcting an image of the specific image type.

As a result, the above-noted method allows the developing process to start without first determining whether a specific image type is contained in the entire region to be processed.

In contrast, none of the applied art is understood to relate to a method for developing an image indicated by a rendering command of an input image in a memory for each predetermined region of the input image and thereby generating an output image by allowing the developing process to start without first determining whether a specific image type is contained in the entire region to be processed. Therefore, the applied art is not understood to disclose or suggest the rendering-command acquiring, analyzing, developing, color-distribution acquiring, carrying out, outputting, and reacquiring steps recited by independent Claim 16. For this reason, Applicant respectfully requests that Claim 16 be held to be allowed over the applied art. And because independent Claims 20 and 21 are corresponding apparatus and recording medium claims, respectively, Applicant respectfully requests that these claims also be allowed.

The dependent claims are allowable for the reasons given for independent Claim 16 and because they recite features that are patentable in their own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the application is now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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